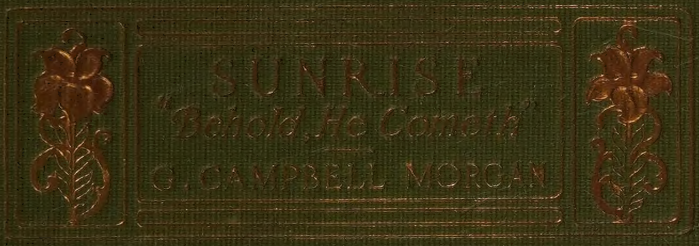
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SUNRISE

"BEHOLD, HE COMETH!"

AN INTRODUCTION TO
A STUDY OF THE SECOND ADVENT

By
G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D.D.

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TO MY READERS

THE Chapters in this book were preached as sermons to my own people during Advent. In response to the urgent request of many, they are published.

I have consented to do this because I feel they may be of some service to a wider congregation than that which my voice reaches; and because I also feel the great importance of the subject itself.

My treatment of that subject here is of the most general kind, intended only to direct attention to the theme, in order to stir up interest and lead to study.

The title under which I publish the sermons indicates the Biblical conception, as I understand it, of what the second advent of our Lord will be. We are not looking for the Star in the East, but for the "Sun of Righteousness" to arise "with

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healing in His Wings"; for "the day that burneth as a furnace."

Since the Day-star appeared two millenniums have well-nigh run their course, and in the Church's weariness she has often said, "The Lord delayeth His coming"; instead of accounting "that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation."

In the hearts of many the Day-star is already shining, and this in itself is a witness to Sunrise.

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN.

WESTMINSTER CHAPEL,
LONDON.

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I

THE TEACHING OF THE LORD

I

THE TEACHING OF THE LORD

"If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—JOHN xiv. 3.

"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come."—JOHN xvi. 13.

THE second advent of our Lord is a subject which vast multitudes of His disciples wholly neglect; or to which they refer with uncertainty, and often with suspicion and incredulity. A full discussion of the reason of this attitude would involve an examination of the history of Christian doctrine. Such examination is not within the purpose of these meditations, neither is it necessary for present and

practical purposes. It may be well, however, that we should recognize some of the causes for it, which are more immediate.

Among these I should place first in order that of the wide-spread neglect of the personal and earnest study of the Scriptures of truth. It is quite impossible honestly to study the writings of the New Testament, without being compelled at least to consider the subject, for they are full of the light and glory of it, and were most evidently written by men to whom it was a subject of supreme importance.

Another reason which I think needs very careful notice, because it applies to so very many, is that attitude, not of antagonism, nor of indifference, but of wholesome fear, resulting largely from the methods of some who have been advocates of what is known as the Pre-millennial view of the coming of the Lord. If I may speak experimentally, I have found, in the course of my work of Bible teaching on both sides of the

Atlantic, thousands of people, whose Christianity could not possibly be called in question, but who were afraid of the subject for this reason. Every attempt that has been made to fix a date, even approximately, has brought the truth into discredit, especially in view of the fact that many predictions have been made, and changed with startling adroitness, in order that the date might still further be postponed, in view of previous mistakes.

It will, however, readily be conceded that any subject which has a prominent place in the New Testament ought to demand our consideration; and that it is not fair to turn aside from such a subject because of the misinterpretations of those who, in their teaching, have violated one of the fundamental positions of the New Testament, that namely, that the hour of the Lord's return is not known, nor can be.

Over against this fact of neglect there are certain indications of the mental mood of the

moment towards this subject, which I think are most suggestive, and to two of which I desire briefly to refer.

Recently Mrs. Besant delivered a series of remarkable addresses in the Queen's Hall, London, on Sunday evenings, in the course of which she declared her conviction that we are approaching an hour in which a new world teacher will appear. She further announced it as her conviction that this teacher must come from the East, as all the great teachers of the past have done. Finally, she definitely said that she was convinced that the teacher who is to come will be the Christ of the Christian Church, Who came two millenniums ago.

So significant were these addresses, in the opinion of Dr. Horton, that he preached on the subject to his own people on a Sunday evening, and the sermon which he then delivered has been printed in pamphlet form and distributed widely by the Theosophical Society as expressing his

agreement with the general position which Mrs. Besant took up in these lectures.

The other indication of the mental mood of the hour is the fact that at the present moment the trend of advanced Biblical criticism is toward the restoration to authenticity of the apocalyptic teachings of Jesus. This is a very remarkable change of front, for the most advanced critics had ruled them out as being not genuine. Dr. Horton, in the pamphlet to which I have already referred, draws attention to this fact. He says:

> "The whole trend of the advanced scholarship of our time . . . is to declare that the main teaching of Christ was this apocalyptic return."

Mr. W. A. Grist, in his book "The Historical Christ in the Faith of To-day," says:

> "The trend of recent New Testament criticism is to lay increasing emphasis upon the validity of the apocalyptic elements in the teaching of Jesus."

I am not proposing to dwell upon these matters, interesting and suggestive as they are. Indeed I do not think that we should lay any undue value upon either of them. I simply refer to them as indicating a mental attitude.

Mrs. Besant's position entirely ignores that part of the New Testament story which does not fit in with her philosophy, and consequently absolutely fails to interpret the second advent according to Christian standards. That will immediately be seen when we quote one paragraph, in which she says:

> "When the Supreme Teacher came to found Christianity, the public mind was unprepared for His coming; only the Wise noted the shining of the Star in the East. The opposition stirred up was so strong, the recognition was confined to so few, *that He was able to give the world the blessing of His physical presence only for three brief years.* Perchance if our band grows large enough in every country to prepare men's

hearts for His appearing, and to give Him effective welcome when He comes, the Lord of Love may remain with us for a period less brief, and do a work less restricted than that which was possible two thousand years ago."

All those who are familiar with the New Testament story of the first advent of our Lord will immediately detect the things that are missing from that statement. Everyone will recognize how partial, and therefore how false, a representation that is, according to New Testament teaching, of our Lord's first advent. According to Mrs. Besant He was the Lord of Love, and when He came, because men were not ready to receive Him, He could not stay more than three years. The part of her statement containing this view I have italicized. Now we believe that He remained exactly as long as it was in the purpose of God that He should, and that during that time He perfectly accomplished that fundamental work

which has prepared for, and will result in His second advent. While these are the essential points of difference, we cannot escape from the remarkable fact that Mrs. Besant, of whom I personally would always speak with respect, who but a few years ago was a secularist lecturer, is to-day, having traveled by a strange pathway, declaring that the hope of the world is the coming again of our Christ.

Neither do we attach any undue importance to the opinion of the advanced critics, because some of these are making use of this admission of the authenticity of the apocalyptic sections of His teaching to discredit Him, by declaring that such utterances demonstrate the fact that He was not the final Divine Teacher, in that He shared the limited and mistaken outlook of His time. Moreover, we are not unduly elated at their restoration of these utterances, for the simple reason that we never accepted their rejection of them.

Nevertheless those who watch the signs of the

times, and listen to the voices to which men generally are listening, cannot but be impressed with the fact that from two sources, so utterly different and opposed in some senses, testimony is being borne to a sense of expectation, and a new seal is being set upon the accuracy of the records concerning these apocalyptic utterances of our Lord.

Our appeal, however, is to Biblical literature, and consequently, without any further reference to these evidences of the mental mood of the hour, we shall turn to the sacred writings and consider; first, the teaching of our Lord Himself on this subject; secondly, the teaching of the Paraclete, according to the promise of Jesus; and finally, the practical bearing of this subject on the life and work of the Church. It should be recognized that the present meditations are general, rather than particular; and constitute a survey of the whole, rather than an examination of details.

The two verses from the Gospel of John which

we read by way of introduction to our meditation contain two promises, both of them made under the shadow of the Cross, both of them uttered in the course of His final discourses to His own disciples.

The first was most clearly a promise of His own personal return. It contained no word concerning the method, no word concerning the hour, no distinction between the phases or aspects of that personal return; but one word of simple, definite, and direct promise intended to comfort and strengthen the sorrowing hearts of His disciples in the hour of their approaching bereavement. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

The second promise given a little later in the same discourse declared that when He had disappeared from view as to bodily presence, there should come Another, of Whom He spoke as the Paraclete, the Advocate Comforter, or the com-

forting Advocate; and He distinctly said that He, that Spirit of truth, Who should come to them in new and special sense as the result of His own ascension, would declare to them things to come.

The first of these promises indicates the subject of this meditation. We shall not consider the promise in detail, but endeavor to find what He said concerning the subject in the course of His ministry, and when He said these things. The second promise prepares the way for our next study, and to it we shall return.

In considering the promise of His own coming, we shall notice first, the fact of His predictions; secondly, some phases to which He did refer; and finally, His consequent command to all who bear His name.

My first affirmation must be made in the most general terms. Our Lord did clearly,—not once or twice, but repeatedly, and at definitely marked crises in His ministry, and with carefulness of detail,—declare that He Himself would come

again. In the sermon to which I have already twice made reference, Dr. Horton said,

> "No one can read the New Testament carefully without expecting this, the parousia, the coming again of the Lord."

In another book, to which I have also made reference, that of Mr. Grist, we have this declaration:—

> "We ought to keep in mind the fact that Jesus predicted not only His own death, but also His reappearance; and, with that note of authority and transcendence which characterized Him, inculcated upon His disciples the duty of watchfulness for His return. In His own personal outlook it appears that Jesus anticipated the Cross at the beginning of His Messianic reign, and that from that point the Kingdom should increase analogously with the seed sown into the soil; but, besides this graduated progress, He also fore-

told certain crises and epochs, although He disclaimed knowledge of times and seasons."

From these general affirmations let me turn to a more particular statement, and in doing this I shall endeavor in the most rapid way to give the result of a new examination on my part of the New Testament on this subject.

The first result of this fresh examination is that I notice that He never made anything like a formal declaration as to His return until the crisis at Cæsarea Philippi. Once, and once only I find that which seems to have been a gleam or a hint of something of the kind. This is in the tenth chapter of Matthew, when, sending out His twelve for the first time He said to them, "When they persecute you in this city, flee into the next: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come" (x. 23). Now that was the first reference that He ever made to His coming in any other sense than that of His presence with them

in the world at the time. It was an incidental word, and I personally feel that there can be no escape from the conviction that upon that occasion His reference was not to the coming with which He dealt at a later period, but to His visitation of Jerusalem in judgment at her destruction a generation after His Cross. I know that there are those who believe that this judgment of Jerusalem was that to which He always referred when speaking of His return, but I do not so read my New Testament.

In the Parables setting forth the processes of the Kingdom (Matt. xiii.) He distinctly foretold a Crisis through which the work of establishing the Kingdom should be consummated; and in the light of His subsequent teaching there can be no doubt that this Crisis will be that of His coming; but this He did not clearly declare in the Parables themselves.

It is, then, a remarkable fact that in His teaching there was no definite prediction of His per-

sonal return till Cæsarea Philippi. The more carefully I study the life of the Lord, the more I am impressed with the remarkable nature of the Crisis that then occurred in His ministry. Until Peter's confession had been made He never mentioned the Cross, the Church, nor His second coming. Everything up to that point had been preliminary and preparatory, and only after the confession had been made, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," did He declare His purpose of building His Church, the necessity for His Cross and passion, and the certainty of His second coming.

All the evangelists who give any record of that confession of Peter also record the fact that Christ did, in clear language, affirm that He would come again. Let us read the words as they appear in Matthew:

> "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and

then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds."

There can be no escape from the meaning of that statement. There are many things which are not included therein, but it is a clear declaration on His part that He would come again.

Then we have those chapters full of mystery, most difficult to interpret in many ways, the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth in the Gospel of Matthew; the chapters which contain what we speak of as the Olivet prophecies. It is perfectly true that the predictions are involved, but all predictive prophecy is involved. Whoever uttered a prediction, did so as the result of a vision of events which he saw stretched out before him in perspective, and it is almost impossible to convey such a vision in words, without creating some difficulty of interpretation in the mind of the person who reads. In no prophecy of the Bible which is predictive is the fact of an involved method, and that of the necessity for the recognition of per-

spective more patent, than in these Olivet prophecies of our Lord.

All that is necessary, however, for the purpose of this meditation is that we attempt to state in the briefest way the substance of their teaching. That I shall first do by the quotation of another brief paragraph from Mr. Grist's book:

> "Three things are clearly foretold—first, the destruction of Jerusalem and the accompanying disasters, when amid the religious and political unrest false Messiahs would arise; secondly, the final age, or times of the Gentiles, during which time the Gospel should be preached throughout the world; and thirdly, the second coming of the Son of man in power and glory—an end which should prove a new beginning."

That is a singularly lucid summary of the main teaching of these prophecies.

In these chapters, then, we have the final apocalyptic utterances of our Lord. As in the

paschal discourses we have His final teaching for His own disciples, so here we have His final predictions as to the future. A careful reading of them will show that He had in His mind; first God's ancient people, Israel; secondly, His Church, that new spiritual entity which He was about to create, and through which he would work; and finally, the Nations of the world. The whole of the prophecy moves in these three circles. They are concentric, in that whether He spoke of Israel, or of the Church, or of the Nations, He declared that a consummation will be created by His own return. He Himself will deal with Israel, solving its problems, and realizing its purpose, when He shall come again. In three parables, those of the Steward, the Virgins, and the Talents, He taught that the responsibility of His Church is conditioned by the fact of His return. And finally, in that dignified and marvelous picture—which we so constantly misinterpret by making it apply to individuals, when really it

applies to nations—portraying His judgment of the nations, He declared that this judgment will take place when He comes again.

With regard to this final section of the Olivet prophecy it may be well at once to say that it is not at all necessary to read into this prediction the popular idea of the gathering to one center of all the individuals making up the nations. At the present time a Conference is sitting at The Hague on the Opium question. Twelve nations are there gathered together. No one imagines that statement to mean that all the peoples making up the nations, are there. The nations are gathered representatively, and that is all that is necessarily implied in this picture of final national judgment. The matter of supreme importance is that of the King, gathering the nations to Himself, discriminating between them, finding verdicts, and uttering sentences.

The fact is so apparent that a child cannot escape it, that our Lord declared, in answer to the

inquiry of His puzzled disciples, that the end of the age would be created by His own return. I almost hesitate to say, and yet I am compelled to do so, that if any one considers that He was mistaken, that is another subject! The plain meaning of these words is perfectly clear.

After Cæsarea Philippi, and before this formal prophecy, He had repeatedly made incidental reference to the same fact. Beyond the Olivet prophecies He made His last statement to His own disciples in the words of our text, "I come again, and will receive you unto Myself"; while His last definite and solemn statement was made in the hour of His trial, when He said to the high priest, "I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." There is yet one more incidental reference to the subject, recorded when on the memorable occasion of the giving of the final commission to Peter, He said to him, in rebuking him for a question he

had asked concerning John, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

This teaching of our Lord reveals some phases of the advent. Briefly let me summarize them. He declared that when He came again, it should be to receive His own to be with Himself. He declared also that when He came again, it would be for judgment.

Judgment does not mean punishment alone. Punishment may be an element in judgment. Judgment is discrimination, decision; the finding of a verdict, and the passing of a sentence. It is also the establishment of order, insistence upon it, and consequently its full realization. There are people who tremble when they read in the Old Testament that He shall rule the nations with a rod of iron, as though that were a cruel thing. It is exactly what the world needs. The rod of iron is the rule of inexorable and unbending justice. When this rule obtains, there are those who will be broken in pieces. Tyrants will bite the

dust, and be undone; but all the bruised and broken will be lifted into the realm of light. He declared that when He comes again, He will come for judgment, in order to the establishment of that Kingdom, the principles and practices of which He expressed in that Manifesto, which He uttered in the earlier days of His earthly ministry.

Over and over again He laid upon His disciples the injunction to watch. There was never a hint in all His teaching as to when He would come. Indeed, it was in connection with that matter that He uttered that most remarkable declaration that of the hour none knew, neither angels, nor He Himself, but only the Father. His plain declaration was that He Who had come, would come again, and His command was that His disciples should watch for His appearing.

Of course all this is but a survey of our Lord's teaching, an attempt to mass into brief statement His declarations on the subject of His second advent.

In the Christian Church to-day we have what we may describe as reasoned objections to the idea that He will actually come again. Among these, we may refer first to those which are based upon a wrong conception of the responsibility of the Church for the world. There is a widespread opinion that the work of the Church is the conversion of the world, and wherever this is held, these statements of Jesus with regard to His personal return are spiritualized. Now, as a matter of fact, there is not a single command of Jesus which warrants us in believing that the responsibility of the Church is the conversion of the world. The Church is called to the work of evangelizing the world, but not by a single parable of Jesus, nor by one sentence in His teaching, did He ever give us to understand that as the result of the Church's mission, the world would be converted. All His teaching, on the contrary, shows that our responsibility is fulfilled by the declaration of the evangel, and predicts a crisis

when there will be a separation, as for instance, between tares and wheat, to be followed by a new beginning.

Reasoned objections to the doctrine of our Lord's return have been advanced by those who call in question the accuracy of the records, because they affirm matters which do not square with their philosophy. Of course a prior question must be settled in the case of such, as to whether the records are authoritative and authentic. With this subject we do not now stay to deal.

The most modern objection is that this view of our Lord's actual, positive coming again to complete His work, does not harmonize with the method of God as revealed in nature. That objection is based upon an entirely false interpretation of Divine methods, resulting as it seems to me from an imperfect understanding of the evolutionary activity. It is declared that the method of God is evolutionary, and consequently that there can be no crisis such as would be created by an

actual coming of the Lord. But is not that the result of a faulty understanding of the evolutionary process? Dr. Orr has recently said:

> "Perhaps the side on which the currents have been flowing most strongly in Science, inimical to faith, is along the line of the theory of evolution. Do not expect from me a general tirade against evolution. I have no quarrel with evolution at all so far as science has proved it. There is only one thing I would say; do not fall into the mistake of supposing that evolution is the same thing as Darwinism. That is where the mistake lies. The peculiarity of recent developments of the scientific theory is just the abandonment of Darwinism and the falling back upon a conception of evolution which recognizes that the work is being done from within, that there is mind and purpose within it, and that *it is not a slow and gradual process creeping along at the rate of millenniums for some slight change, as Darwin insisted upon, but that it may take place*

by leaps and bounds, by 'mutation' as they call it; that there are periods when these leaps are very marked, and result in the production right off, the striking out, of new types and species."

That statement seems to me to have a very direct bearing on our subject. Science is demonstrating the fact that God proceeds by slow processes, and by crises, that there is not merely a slow and gradual movement, but that there are mutations, clear and definite, by which He proceeds to new things.

But let us leave the illustration on the lower level, and come to the Biblical revelation. To deny the second advent because it would be of the nature of a crisis is to deny the first advent, for the same reason. If the Son of God is not coming again, because God never works by crises following processes, then the Son of God never came, for there is no greater wonder in the fact of His coming again, than in that of His first

coming. That particular form of the evolution theory has influenced theology at this end of our Lord's history also, and those who hold it deny that He ever *came,* in our simple sense of the word, affirming that He was but one of us, of our humanity, realizing the ways of God in more perfect degree than any other, but that there was no advent, no descent of Deity into humanity, no incarnation, and consequently, no special and specific difference between Him and other men.

We still believe that God was manifest in flesh, that He took human form, that He laid hold upon our nature; that the Man of Nazareth did not come into human history by the will or action of humanity, but by the mystery of a virgin birth; that God was incarnate.

That was indeed a crisis, and to admit that, and to believe it, is to believe it possible that what He said was true, that He Who came once, is coming a second time. To deny the possibility

of another advent because there can be no crisis in the method of God, is inevitably to deny the reality of the first coming, as a definite and distinct coming of God into human life and history.

II

THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT

II

THE TEACHING OF THE SPIRIT

"Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."—JOHN xvi. 13, 14.

WHILE our special subject is that of the second advent, it is necessary that we pause long enough to glance at the wider application of the particular words of our Lord by which this meditation is prefaced. They were uttered in connection with His promise of the coming of the Spirit. The value of that coming to the world He had already declared in the words, "He . . . will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."

The value of the coming of the Spirit to the disciples is set forth in these words. He first declared that the coming of the Spirit would provide a double teaching value. The first value is expressed in the words: "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth." That statement was followed by a parenthetical interpretation; "for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak." The second value is expressed in the words: "And He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." That statement of our Lord was immediately followed by an inclusive word gathering up these two values, and revealing their common value, "He shall glorify Me."

As these first disciples were gathered about the Lord in the upper room, they were in possession of the *fact* of His presence in the world, and the *facts* of all the works which they had seen Him perform; they were in the presence of the *Word*

made flesh, and their memory was stored with the *words* which had fallen from His lips. What they supremely needed was an interpretation of the inclusive *fact* of Christ, and of the inclusive *Word* of God.

To put that into another form; these men were sure of the wonderful works He had been doing, and the wonderful words He had been saying; but they had no conception of Himself as the supreme Work of God, or as the supreme Word of God. What they needed was to be guided into the truth, to be brought to an apprehension of the very things in the midst of which they had lived. That was their need, and this is what the Lord promised should be given to them when the Spirit should come; "He shall guide you into all the truth"; "He shall declare unto you the things that are to come"; "He shall glorify Me."

When the Spirit came that promise was fulfilled. He guided these men, and through them, His people for all time, into the truth concern-

ing Himself; He showed these men, and through their teaching, to His people for all time, the things to come.

Now returning to our special theme, we shall consider the fulfillment of this promise in its bearing on the second advent. The promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. The New Testament is the result, for the sacred writings of the Christian Church issued from the coming of the Holy Spirit.

It is not for us now to deal with the reason why these particular writings have been selected and retained. A discussion of the question of the Canon is impossible at this time. I shall take for granted our familiarity with that wonderful overruling of the Spirit of God in the history of the Church which has given us the New Testament; the supreme demonstration of the inspiration of which is found in the marvelous unity and completeness of the revelation which it contains.

In the New Testament we have first the four

Gospels, severely limited to the account of what these men possessed before Pentecost, to the deeds of Jesus which they had seen, and to the words which they had heard from His lips; and all that, most methodically and systematically stated, as a guide for the Church for all time.

Then we have the book of the Acts, which is a record of activity on the part of the Church in the interest of the world.

Next in order we have a collection of epistles containing teaching intended exclusively for the Church. In these epistles we find the fulfillment of the promise of Jesus that the Spirit shall guide into all the truth.

Finally we have the book of Revelation, the unveiling of Jesus Christ. This contains teaching for the Church concerning the Kingdom, symbolic, mysterious, wonderful, never to be neglected by any true student of the Scriptures, but always to be approached in exposition reverently, and with a sense of limitation. In this book the prom-

ise is fulfilled, "He shall declare unto you the things that are to come."

In the Gospels, then, we found the teaching of Jesus our Lord on the second advent as He gave it during the days of His flesh. In the rest of the New Testament we shall find the teaching of the Spirit, and our present purpose is to gather up in the briefest way possible, that teaching on these matters. That we shall do by considering the subject of the second advent in the Acts; in the epistles; and in the Apocalypse.

In the Acts of the Apostles we have first of all the record of a brief interval between the departure of our Lord, and the coming of the Paraclete; and this reference to the second advent;

> "While they were looking steadfastly into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like

manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven."

The Lord had departed. The Spirit had not come. Two men,—not two angels, I pray you notice,—two of the spirits of the just made perfect, stood by them. I once heard Dwight Lyman Moody say, "I wonder who those men were. I rather think they were Moses and Elijah who had been with Him on the holy mount." I do not know; but I stored that thought in my memory as a wonderful suggestion. These two men bridged the interval between His departure and the coming of the Spirit by declaring in language absolutely unmistakable that He would come again as the disciples had seen Him go.

Beyond that record of an interval we have the story of Pentecost, and the rest of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Now the outstanding impression made upon my mind by a new reading of this book, is that of its comparative silence on this subject. This is a true picture of Christian

service. The disciples are seen obedient to the last command of the Lord, publishing the evangel of His grace, proclaiming the resurrection, and interpreting the Cross in the light thereof. All the messages chronicled are messages to the world, and consequently their supreme notes are those of the first advent, the advent of grace, and of human responsibility in the presence of the fact that the Lord has already come, been crucified, raised from the dead, and exalted to the Throne.

We find in the Acts of the Apostles only two clear, definite, and positive declarations concerning the Lord's return. Yet these two are most suggestive, both with regard to the places they occupy in the narrative, and the peculiar emphasis they lay on the subject.

In the third chapter we have the record of a message of Peter specifically to Israel. The first sermon preached in the power of Pentecost was preached to all who were assembled, and while it had a special bearing on Israel, it was also a

message to all men. In that there were evident allusions to the Lord's return, but nothing positive, nothing definite. In the third chapter, however, when the apostle was speaking definitely to Israel, he uttered these words:

> "The things which God foreshewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He thus fulfilled. Repent ye, therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ Who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus; Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, whereof God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began."

That was a clear and definite declaration that the Lord Who had suffered and been raised, *was now received by the heavens, until the time of restoration;* accompanied by the equally clear in-

junction that they should repent and so hasten the hour when God *would send His Christ again.*

The other reference is in the seventeenth chapter of the Acts, and came from the lips of Paul. He was speaking to the Athenians, and in reading the passage I am going to substitute another word for *judge;* not a better word, but another; I substitute it because we have come to associate the thought of punishment only with the word judge, and that is not the only value of the word. These were Paul's words:

> "He hath appointed a day in the which He will govern the world in righteousness by the Man Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead."

By these quotations we have exhausted the definite teaching of the Acts of the Apostles on the subject of our Lord's second advent.

We have, then, a distinct statement by each of

the outstanding men of the Acts, Peter and Paul. The aspect of the advent which these two declarations emphasize is that of the coming and establishment of the Kingdom in the world. Both these men were looking out at the world. Peter was speaking to Israel, and he referred to the restoration of all things, the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world, using thus the phrase with which Hebrews would be familiar. Paul was speaking to the Gentiles, and he spoke not so much of the ultimate issue, as of the method of leading to it and employed within it;—He shall judge or govern the world in righteousness by the Man Whom He hath ordained.

Through both these declarations, then, we see the shining of the glory of the Kingdom of God established in the world, and the fact insisted upon in each case,—by Peter, speaking to Israel; and by Paul, speaking to the Gentile world,—that the restoration of all things, and the judgment or government of the world in righteousness, will

result from the actual return of the Lord Himself. Beyond this the book of the Acts is silent.

Then we turn to the epistles, and inquire what they teach about the second advent. Let me first say that every writer refers to the fact. We have writings by two of the original twelve, Peter and John; two of the brethren of our Lord, James and Jude; the writer of the letter to the Hebrews, whosoever that may have been; and Paul, and every one of them makes reference to the fact of the Lord's return.

Peter said among other things, "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

John, in words that we all love, wrote, "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if"—and the "if" does not suggest doubt, it is merely a method of argument,—"if He shall

be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as He is. And everyone that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

James, the practical, the ethical, wrote, "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

Jude, the man who had laid himself out to write a great treatise on salvation, and abandoning the purpose under the guidance of the Spirit, wrote a half-page letter, said, "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

The writer of the letter to the Hebrews, in language almost startlingly plain, arresting, and

inclusive, declared: "Wherefore Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation."

These quotations are taken almost at haphazard from the writings in order to illustrate the fact that every New Testament writer was conscious that the Lord would return, thought and wrought in the light of that fact, and made such incidental allusion to it as to make it certain for us that it was part of the common teaching and conviction of those early times.

Then we come to the writings of Paul, and we find throughout the whole of them allusions to this great matter.

In the Roman letter, when dealing with the ultimate triumph of salvation, he wrote of the "glory which shall be revealed," declaring that the "creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God," and affirming that those "which have the firstfruits of the Spirit" are "waiting

for . . . the redemption of our body." Throughout the whole of that argument, the glory of the second advent hope shines brightly.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, when dealing with the great subject of the Resurrection, he declared that as Christ was the firstfruits, so "they that are Christ's at His coming," shall also be raised from the dead.

In his second letter to the Corinthians, in expressing the hope that they would remain faithful to the end, he referred to his and their glorying in each other "in the day of our Lord Jesus."

Even in the Galatian letter, which was the most polemic of all his writings, the light broke through, as in the midst of an argument he declared, "We through the Spirit by faith wait for the hope of righteousness."

The glory of the Ephesian letter consists in its revelation of the eternal vocation of the Church; and while there is no direct reference in that

wonderful letter to the advent, the apostle's vision of the Church to-day was that of a Body, growing up into the Head, until the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ is reached. This, interpreted by his teaching in other letters, was a distinct allusion as to time, to the advent, when the number of the elect will be complete, and the glory of Christ be fully manifested.

In the Philippian letter he distinctly declared, our citizenship is in heaven, "from whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory."

In the Colossian letter, when speaking of the final manifestation of the life of the Christian, he linked it with the manifestation of Christ Himself, in the words, "When Christ, our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory."

In his first letter to Timothy he charged him to

"keep the commandment, without spot, without reproach, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and in his second letter, when charging him to "preach the Word," he did so as one acting "in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His Kingdom."

In his letter to Titus, in dealing with the wonders of grace, he declared that those to whom it brings salvation, and whom it instructs, are "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ."

And even in the brief letter to Philemon, there is what may fairly be considered an allusion to the advent, when the apostle said that he prayed that the communication of Philemon's "faith may become effectual" by the acknowledging "of every good thing which is in" him, "unto Christ"; that is, unto His glory, and as we have seen, the manifestation of that glory both in

Christ and in His saints, will be perfected at His advent, when, as the apostle said in his second letter to the Thessalonians, "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be marveled at in all them that believe."

Then finally in the Thessalonian letters, we have Paul's specific teaching on this great theme of our Lord's return. The first letter deals with the aspect of the advent which affects the Christian Church. Let me gather up its values in a few sentences. It declares that the advent is the goal of Christian life. It declares that at the advent we shall receive the reward of Christian service. It declares that at the advent there will be the perfecting of Christian character. And, therefore, the letter teaches that the truth of the Lord's return is the true comfort of all Christian sorrow, and that the fact that He is coming, and that we know not when, is the inspiration of all Christian diligence.

In that first Thessalonian writing too, we have

a wonderful description of the order of the advent, so far as the Church is concerned.

> "We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep."

Those that have fallen asleep will come with Him, first being raised; then we who are alive and remain,

> "shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

In the second Thessalonian letter the apostle dealt with the aspect of the advent which affects the world. It is terrible and magnificent. At that advent there will occur the final judgment of lawlessness, and the vindication of faith. In connection with that advent there will be the destruction of the head and center of lawlessness as it is manifested in Antichrist.

We come finally to the last book, the Apocalypse. I think it is well that we should be specially reminded, first of all, of the relation of the teaching of this book to the promise of Jesus, "He shall declare unto you the things that are to come." I take up the book of the Revelation, and I commence to read it;

> "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, *which God gave Him to shew unto His servants,* even the things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John."

I go back again to the Gospel of John, and read in the seventeenth chapter the prayer of Jesus. He Who had spoken to His disciples of His going, and of the coming of the Spirit, was now speaking to His Father, and He uttered these words,

> "The words *which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them;* and they received them,

> and knew of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me."

The connection and the continuity between these things is very striking. In the Apocalypse we have that which *God gave him to shew.* Before Pentecost He had said to His disciples,

> "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come."

When John was in Patmos in the Spirit, in the day of the Lord, seeing signs and wonders, the central and inclusive sign was that of the Lord Himself, saying to John things that God had given him to say, but which were not said before Pentecost.

The key-note of the book is found in the words,

> "Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over Him. Even so, Amen."

That being recognized, we may group the general teaching of the book around the revelation of the Person, the purpose, and the process.

If there is one thing more remarkable than another in the book of Revelation it is that the Person Who is central to the book is the Lamb slain. If a group of us who love this book best, were to sit down and talk about it, we should differ in our interpretation of its signs, yet be one in the conviction that all the movements described proceeded under the dominion of the Lamb slain. The book, then, reveals the final out-working of the Cross in human history.

The purpose revealed is that of the complete triumph of the Lamb slain. I like to look back to the Gospel narrative, and read the word of the

Roman procurator, "Behold, the Man." There He stood, thorn-crowned, scourge-lacerated, bruised, broken, dying! I then take up the letter to the Hebrews and read, "He shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation." Then I come to the Apocalypse, and I read, "Behold, He cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see Him"; and then, by ways that are filled with mystery, and through the thunder of a conflict that appalls my soul, I see the Lamb marching to the ultimate throne of universal empire as absolute Victor.

But the book of Revelation has another note. It reveals not only the centrality of the Person of the Lamb slain; not only the completeness of His triumph; but the fact of His conflict with spiritual forces acting through material agencies. If spiritual forces of evil act through material agencies, then, in the ultimate establishment of His Kingdom, He will act through material agen-

cies in His spiritual conflict, in order to the overthrow of these powers of evil.

Wars, and rumors of wars, battle and bloodshed, do these things fill the soul with dread in the book of the Apocalypse? Then let us remember that they are but the final out-workings in human history of the mystery of lawlessness, of evil, as spiritual forces express themselves through material agencies; and they tell the story of the manner in which the returning Son of God will proceed against these, in order to their destruction.

The last pages of the book tell of a city that has come out of heaven, and of a song, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them."

In spite of mystic language, and signs, and symbols that cause us pause, and which perhaps we cannot finally interpret to the satisfaction of any save ourselves, the clear shining can never be missed, and the teaching is unmistakable that

for the establishment of His Kingdom, and the final mastery of evil, the Lord Himself is coming again.

"Hark what a sound, and too divine for hearing,
Stirs on the earth and trembles in the air!
Is it the thunder of the Lord's appearing?
Is it the music of His people's prayer?

"Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices
Shout to the saints and to the deaf are dumb;
Surely He cometh, and the earth rejoices
Glad in His coming who hath sworn, I come.

"This hath He done, and shall we not adore Him?
This shall He do, and can we still despair?
Come let us quickly fling ourselves before Him,
Cast at His feet the burthen of our care."

Let us catch up and repeat out of consecrated lives the answer of the Bride to the Lamb as it is written in the book of the Revelation. When the Lord says to us, as He is saying to-day, "Yea, I come quickly," let us answer Him, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus."

III

THE VALUES TO THE CHURCH

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THE VALUES TO THE CHURCH

"And to wait for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, Which delivereth us from the wrath to come."—1 THESS. i. 10.

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming? For ye are our glory and our joy."—ii. 19, 20.

"To the end He may stablish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus with all His saints."—iii. 13.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—iv. 18.

"And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, Who will also do it."—v. 23, 24.

IN our two previous meditations we have considered in outline the teaching of the Lord Jesus as found in the Gospels, and that of the Holy Spirit as found in the rest of the

New Testament, on the subject of the second advent.

In the same general way we shall now consider the values of this fact to the Church of God. In order to brevity and conciseness we shall confine ourselves to Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians.

A brief reference to the history of the founding of the Church at Thessalonica, and the consequent reason of the writing of this particular letter will reveal my reason for selecting it.

After a period of apparent hindrance, Paul had been driven as far as Troas, where he saw the beckoning finger of the man of Macedonia. At once recognizing this as the Divine call, he crossed from Asia into Europe, and preached first at Philippi. As the result of persecution, he passed on to Thessalonica, where for three Sabbath days he proclaimed the evangel in the synagogue; and then, as the result of the persecution of the Jews, turned to the Gentiles, and a mar-

velous work of God followed. This work proceeded in the midst of strong opposition stirred up by the Jews, but expressing itself through the Gentiles, because he had proclaimed the Kingship of Jesus. Under stress of this persecution the apostle left Thessalonica in company with Silas, and took refuge for a while in Berœa, presently passing on to Athens, and ultimately to Corinth. Timothy, whom he had left in Thessalonica for a time, joined him at Athens, and reported the condition of the Thessalonian Christians; and there can be little doubt that this letter was written as the result of that report, and within a few months of Paul's departure from Thessalonica.

The Thessalonian Christians, therefore, were being persecuted specifically on account of their loyalty to Jesus as Lord. The purpose of Paul's writing was to comfort them and to strengthen them. What more natural, then, than that he should write to them of the return of the absent and hidden King, for loyalty to Whom they were

thus suffering? That, briefly, is the story of the writing of the letter. It is, therefore, pre-eminently, the letter of the New Testament dealing with the subject of the second advent.

Our method in considering the values of that advent as revealed in this letter will be that of taking the five culminating words with reference to the subject, and considering them in two ways; first, as to what they reveal concerning the values of the advent to His own when the Lord shall come; and, secondly, as to what they reveal of the values of the advent in the period of waiting for His coming.

In considering the values of the second advent of our Lord to His own people in the actual hour of His coming, it must be remembered that our thought is limited. The teaching has to do only with such as, to use Paul's words, are "left unto the coming." We are not considering what that advent will mean to the blessed dead, save as incidentally we have the apostolic declaration

that they will come with Him when He comes; and that they will take precedence of those who are alive on this earth, at His coming. The subject of importance to us who meditate this sacred theme is that of what the advent would mean to us should He come again ere this day have waned to night, or the coming night merged into a new morning. There are five things to which the apostle made reference in the verses which preface our study. Let me enumerate them, and then briefly consider each one of them.

The apostle declared first that in the hour of the advent we shall come to completeness of deliverance; Who "delivereth us from the wrath to come."

He declared secondly, that in that hour we shall come to the true reward of all service. "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming?"

He declared, thirdly, that at the coming of the

Lord we shall come to the perfecting of character, and stand "unblamable in holiness" before Him.

He declared, fourthly, that in that hour we shall receive perfect compensation for all sorrow, illustrating the declaration by reference to the most poignant of all sorrows, that of bereavement, charging us to "comfort one another with these words."

Finally, he declared that in the coming of the Lord we shall come to the perfecting of personality, the whole "spirit and soul and body" being "preserved entire."

With reference to the declaration that at the coming of the Lord we shall come to complete deliverance, in the words, "Which delivereth us from the wrath to come," we have a most suggestive statement, of which the implicates are needed in order to a full apprehension of its significance. At first sight it appears to be a very simple statement, and yet this almost casual or incidental word of the apostle implies very

much which does not appear upon the surface, and yet must be recognized. The arresting word is the word "wrath" here employed in a phrase, "the wrath to come," which might with equal accuracy be translated, "the wrath to go." The word here translated "to come" is used in a variety of ways, sometimes being rendered "to come," and sometimes "to go," the thought being that of the activity of wrath, the conception of wrath not merely as passive, but actively operative. The statement is, then, that we are delivered from the operation of wrath by Jesus; and taken in connection with the declaration that we are waiting for Him from heaven, the teaching is that we shall be perfectly delivered from that operation in the hour of the advent.

Now in order to apprehend the value of this more perfectly, let us borrow some light from other Scriptures. In the Roman letter, the foundation letter of the Pauline system, we find this declaration, "The wrath of God is revealed

from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" (i. 18). In the Colossian letter the same writer said, after enumerating certain evil things of the Gentile world, "For which things' sake cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience" (iii. 6). And if we go back to the gospel of John, we find either as the recorded words of Jesus, or as the exposition of John, these words. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (iii. 36).

Now in all these Scriptures we have the revelation of a Divine attitude toward a human attitude. The human attitude is that of ungodliness, which expresses itself in unrighteousness. The Divine attitude toward that is always one of wrath, not passive merely, but active. It is a revelation of God's opposition to ungodliness and unrighteousness in human life and human conduct and human history. It is the New Testa-

ment revelation of the truth which we find in the Old Testament, in language full of figurative force, when the prophet exclaimed, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" In that question the prophet referred to immediate conditions. He looked out on all human life, and saw it atmosphered in fire, the fire of the Divine nearness. He saw that the fire was destroying everything that did not harmonize with its own nature; and he cried, Who can dwell in that? None can dwell in that fire save he who is of the nature of fire. This is the truth in which the New Testament is expressed under the figure running through the Scriptures we have quoted. The wrath of God is the very nature of God in its attitude and activity toward ungodliness, disobedience, and finally, the rejection of His Son.

To follow that a little further is to recognize the fact that in this world there are two forces

antagonistic to each other, those namely of godliness and ungodliness, of righteousness and unrighteousness. Consequently humanity is divided into two camps, the godly and the ungodly, the righteous and the unrighteous; and ultimately, in view of the mission of the Lord Jesus, the obedient and the disobedient, wherever the evangel of Christ has been proclaimed, the believing and the rejecting. Between these opposing camps there is perpetual conflict. The central battle was fought in connection with the first advent, on Calvary, and the victory was with the Lord, and so with godliness, with righteousness, with obedience. The last battle will be fought, and the final victory won in connection with the second advent, when masked, hidden, and insidious evil will be dragged into manifestation in the person of Antichrist, finally smitten to the death, and the Kingdom of God be established for ever.

Now these Thessalonian believers, and all believers have turned to God, to serve Him, and to

wait for His Son. That is to say, they have crossed the line from complicity with the forces of ungodliness, into co-operation with the forces of godliness. They have abandoned the works of unrighteousness for the works of righteousness. They have ceased the life of disobedience for that of obedience. They have ended their rejection of the Son by believing in Him. They have turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven.

Nevertheless all believers continue in the realm of conflict, and consequently in the realm where wrath is operative. The anger of God is still burning, and these fires of God act upon them also. That is the meaning of all our present suffering on account of sin, the sin of others as well as our own. We are still in the realm of the first advent and the Cross. We are still in the place of human suffering, resulting from human sin. In the hour of the second advent we shall be brought to full and final deliverance from that

wrath of God which is active against ungodliness, as we are brought into relationship with the Lord as the triumphant and glorified One. Then we shall feel no longer the fire of His wrath, shall no longer be left in the place of pain or of suffering. I endure to-day the results of my own sinning, and the results of the sinning of others. So also does every saint of God. We are all bearing something of the punishment of sin of our own, and of others, and shall do so until the advent. There is infinite value in this fact, for by the transfiguring power of His grace, such suffering on the part of the saints is, in a mystery almost too deep for explanation, fellowship with His suffering. But in the hour when He appears a second time apart from sin unto salvation, we shall be finally delivered from the wrath that acts, from the fire that burns. It is in that hour that we shall come to perfect deliverance from the wrath to come.

There is undoubtedly a very definite and im-

mediate value in this declaration in relation to the activities of the advent. One phase of that will be the full and final operation of His wrath against ungodliness, but from this we shall be delivered by being caught up into union and fellowship with Himself, as He acts, apart from sin, unto salvation.

The second fact of value, to which the apostle referred, was that of the reward of service. In these verses we have a wonderful picture presented to the vision, as the apostle exclaimed, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of glorying? Are not even ye, before our Lord Jesus at His coming?"

Now, if we are merely mechanical in our reading, we cannot understand that. It is only as we permit the Holy Spirit to inspire our imagination that we can see the glory of the vision that flamed before the apostolic mind. It was a vision of the Lord Jesus manifested in glory, and with Him those very men and women of Thessalonica, who

had been won for the Master through the toil and travail of the apostle.

If we glance back over the chapter, of which this statement is the conclusion, we shall find the experiences of that toil referred to. The apostle wrote, "Having suffered before, and been shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God, to speak unto you the Gospel of God in much conflict" (ii. 2). . . . "But we were gentle in the midst of you, as when a nurse cherisheth her own children" (ii. 7). . . . "Ye received from us the word of the message" (ii. 13).

In Thessalonica he had proclaimed the evangel in much conflict. He had cared for the Thessalonian believers with a great and beautiful gentleness as his singularly suggestive statement reveals, "when a nurse cherisheth her own children." Observe in that the combination of trained skill and motherly love; not as when a nurse cherisheth children, nor even as when a mother cherisheth children; but "as when a nurse cherisheth

her *own* children." Add to the love of the mother the skill of the nurse, and you have a revelation of the most perfect gentleness and wisdom. The result of this proclamation and this tender skill was that the Thessalonians received the Word. In these descriptions we are brought face to face with the buffeting, the travail. And now the apostle declared that at the coming of the Lord Jesus, he would see these believers among the saints, and they would constitute his joy and his crown of glorying.

That is a remarkable vision of that great and wonderful hour when we shall see, associated with the Lord in His coming, those whom we have won for Him through the toil and travail of our present service. What an hour it will be, that hour when all the saints will be manifested, and when Christian workers will see in them the real meaning of their toil; when those who patiently, and perhaps without apparent success, gather about them the children, the youths and

the maidens, the promiscuous assemblies of men and women, and proclaim to them the Gospel, will see the results of their work in the saints, manifested with the Lord.

"Saints of the early dawn of Christ, Saints of Imperial Rome.
Saints of the cloistered middle age, Saints of the modern home,
Saints of the soft and sunny East, Saints of the frozen seas,
Saints of the isles that wave their plumes, In the far Antipodes,
Saints of the marts and busy streets, Saints of the squalid lanes,
Saints of the silent solitudes, Of the prairies and the plains,
Saints who were wafted to the skies, In the torment robe of flame,
Saints who have graven on men's thoughts, A monumental name."

Among such will be some as the result of the fact that we preached and taught and suffered and toiled, all resplendent in His glory, and giving His heart satisfaction, and that fact will constitute the reward of all service.

The next declaration of the apostle was that

in the advent we shall come to the perfecting of character. First affirming that the ultimate scrutiny will be that of God Himself, as we stand before God our Father, he proceeded to describe the ultimate condition of those who are presented to Him in the hour of the coming of His Son, as that of having "hearts unblamable in holiness."

We realize immediately what a tremendous description that is. The heart, standing as it ever does in Biblical language for all the central and spiritual facts of personality, will be unblamable, that is without fault, in holiness. We almost tremble in the presence of the description, and desiring to know what it really means, we look back to the words immediately preceding, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men."

That is the heart unblamable in holiness, the heart love-mastered. In the enunciation of His ethic the Lord had said, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," and

Himself had explained what He meant by the previous declaration, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good." Love-mastered life is holiness, and at the advent we shall come to that perfection of character. It was to that consummation that Thomas Kelly looked when he sang,

> "Then we shall be where we would be;
> Then we shall be what we should be;
> Things which are not now, nor could be,
> Then shall be our own."

The fourth phase of value revealed in the teaching of the apostle is indicated in the injunction, "Comfort one another with these words." At the coming of the Lord His people will receive perfect compensation for all their sorrows.

It is important that we should remember that the particular sorrow which the apostle had in mind at the moment was the Thessalonian sorrow, and that their sorrow was on a high level, in that it was utterly unselfish. The Thessalonians were not grieving because they had lost loved

ones, but because they thought that the loved ones who had died, had missed the advent, and so in some sense had suffered loss.

These people as the apostle had declared, had turned to God from idols to serve the living God, and to wait for His Son. Some of their number had died, and they thought that this was in some way wrong; and they ought to have remained until the Lord came; and they were sorrowing, not because they had lost their loved ones, but because their loved ones had lost the advent. We may say that their sorrow was due to ignorance, but it was none the less beautiful; and Paul especially comforted them by declaring that those who remain until the advent will not take precedence of those who have fallen on sleep.

Now I do not mean by this to suggest that sorrow for the loss of our loved ones is wrong, or that there is no comfort for us. Nay, rather, the teaching of the apostle is full of comfort for all bereaved hearts. We do not sorrow as the Thes-

salonians did, because we are better instructed than they were; but we do sorrow, for we miss the friends that have gone before. To all who sorrow thus, there will be perfect compensation in the hour when the Lord brings back such as have fallen asleep. It is in the light of that advent that we are able to sing,

> "Some from earth, from glory some,
> Severed only till He come."

This comfort, in the sense that the sorrow caused by death will be compensated by reunion is a final form. Death is the last enemy, and our sorrow in its presence the ultimate sorrow in our earthly experience. Sorrow is the sense of lack, of something not possessed, of something missing. Consider the whole gamut of sorrow, from that of a child crying for its lost toy, to the inability of the crushed heart to cry because of the agony created by the departure of the loved one; it is always a sense of lack. That final agony, of the bereaved soul, is to find compensation in the

hour of the advent; and so also all sorrow, from the tears of the child to the dumb silence of the impoverished heart will find compensation when He Himself appears; and we find, in fullest sense, our all in Him.

Finally, in the hour of the advent we shall come to the perfect realization of personality, or shall I rather say, to the realization of perfected personality? It is noticeable that this is the great passage in which we have a revelation of Paul's conception of personality, in the words, "spirit and soul and body," or as we will read, "spirit and mind and body." At His advent the saints will come to the perfecting of each of these parts of the one personality; the perfecting of the spirit, the perfecting of the mind, the perfecting of the body.

In Paul's autobiographical passage in the Philippian letter he declared that the ultimate goal of his ambition was that hour of resurrection in which the Lord will "fashion anew the

body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory." That will be the final fact.

Moreover, there will be not merely the perfecting of each part, but the perfecting of all three in their proper inter-relationships. This is suggested by the expression "preserved entire." None of us will come to that perfection of personality until the advent. The spirit is justified when we believe; the mind is sanctified through processes; but not until the perfected body is given to us, can we come to the ultimate meaning of our salvation in Christ. In this final sense our blessed dead are also waiting the perfecting of the advent.

These are the facts into realization of which we shall come at the advent. These are the things for which we wait. In this tabernacle we verily groan. Nevertheless, we also sing, "Now is our salvation nearer to us than when we first believed." We have never yet come to the full

realization of all that is ours in Christ, nor can we, until not merely is the spirit justified, and the mind sanctified, but the body is glorified, and made the perfect instrument of the spirit life. In the hour of the advent of our Lord we shall come to that perfecting.

The values of the advent in the time of our waiting are self-evident. If, indeed, we wait for the Son from heaven, we shall live the godly life, that is, the life which serves the living God, in conflict against unrighteousness, and in perfect loyalty to the Lord Himself. If presently we are to be perfectly and finally delivered from the wrath of God, to-day we shall act in harmony with that wrath, in conflict with all the forces of evil wherever they may manifest themselves, whether in our own lives, or in the conditions in the midst of which we live; content to share the pain of the burning that we, and others may be delivered therefrom.

If the final reward of service is to be that of

souls won for Him, seen in His glory; then the present life will be one of godly service, in which by word and work we proclaim the evangel, and devote ourselves to the sacred business of watching for souls. The question is forced upon us; if He should come and His saints with Him ere the day be done, will there be any among them whom we have won for Him? In the hour of that advent, not the amount of this world's goods which we have amassed, will be of value; not the name we may have made for ourselves among our fellow-men will count; but the souls which we have won by travail.

And yet let not that way of stating the case bring despair to any heart. There are those who say they cannot name any that they have thus influenced for Christ. This does not signify. Have they been living the life of loyalty to the Lord, caring for their own children as in His sight, bearing the witness of godly living among their neighbors? Then let them have no care

for statistics. He will startle many in the hour of His advent by introducing to them, men and women who are His because of what they have been, even though they have never been able to write the name in a book, of any whom they have definitely known as won for Him by their word spoken. The doctrine of the advent does not produce a fever of statistics. It creates an inspiration for service.

This expectation of the advent will necessarily produce a godly love toward one another and toward all men. To wait for the Son from heaven is to cease strife as among ourselves, and to be driven out with a passion to serve and save them that are without.

To wait for the Son is to sorrow in the hour when we are bereft; but the sorrow will be with hope, the sackcloth will be transfigured, and we shall be eager to comfort others with the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.

Finally, conviction of the return of the Lord,

and expectation thereof will produce a godly discipline. If our whole spirit and mind and body are to be preserved entire, then with what earnestness we shall seek for present subjection of spirit, conformity of mind, and mastery of the body, according to the will of the Lord!

The advent of our Lord is in the purpose of our God, and will take place at His time, and by His power. This is the foundation of our certainty, and the secret of our patience.

Therefore, we wait for the advent, according to His will, by living, by serving, by loving, by hoping, by persevering. Not by isolation from the affairs of everyday life, not by withdrawing ourselves from the world's sorrow and its wounds, not by lifting eyes to the heaven, to the forgetfulness of earth; but by fulfilling the daily duties of the home, by diligent attention to business, by the walk along the highways, and the operations of the market-place, all in the will and for the glory of God; all the while hearing in our hearts

the song of His coming, and being ready, whenever He comes, gladly to welcome Him.

"I woke, and the night was passing,
And over the hills there shone
A star all alone in its beauty
When the other stars were gone—

"For a glory was filling the heavens
That came before the day,
And the gloom and the stars together
Faded and passed away.

"Only the star of the morning
Glowed in the crimson sky—
It was like a clear voice singing,
'Rejoice! for the Sun is nigh!'

"O children! a Star is shining
Into the hearts of men—
It is Christ with a voice of singing
'Rejoice! for I come again!'"

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